

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

August 2, 2009

Why church organization matters

by David King

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12).

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you" (Tit. 1:5).

When we read the epistles of the New Testament, it's obvious that the primary mission of Christianity is to prepare people for heaven by developing their personal character. We read page after page of instructions on how to be better people — better spouses, better parents, better workers, better neighbors, better citizens, better friends, better brethren. And all these improvements are driven by better attitudes about God, other people, and ourselves. The message is unmistakable: Train people to get their hearts and behaviors straightened out, and the battle against sin has been won.

But how is that training administered? Who is responsible for adapting instruction to all the different types of people who need it? Who are the leaders who can take the initiative to see that this development program is successful for every saint? Or is every Christian simply left to himself to figure it out on his own?

The epistles to the Ephesians and Titus provide the answer to this question. Skim through the latter chapters of both letters (Eph. 4-6; Tit. 2-3), and you will notice that both epistles are dominated by instructions on

how to be better people. That is the primary objective. But both of these sections are preceded by the verses that open this article: In Ephesians, Paul lists the offices or functions that are responsible for equipping the saints, and in Titus, Paul instructs the young preacher to get elders installed in every congregation. The order in both epistles is deliberate: God's people build character in churches that are organized according to a divine plan.

In other words, church organization matters. God has not left it up to us to determine how we should organize ourselves. His instructions for church organization (see also Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3; Ac. 14:23; etc.) are a critical component in His larger plan for strengthening His people. We ignore or tamper with that plan to our own peril.

The history of Christianity is littered with examples of this truth in action. In virtually every case of apostasy, the errors started with the corruption of the leadership. God's simple model was replaced by an ever more complex bureaucracy of offices, fueling power struggles among ambitious men who were more concerned with building empires rather than character. Political intrigues and jostling for positions of prominence replaced simple teaching of the people, with the result that the entire enterprise drifted away from God.

Church organization matters, and we must take care to respect it. But it is still only a means to a greater end: the development of the individual Christian. We must never lose sight of that higher goal.